



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations
Da: Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2003

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, today made the following statement today regarding negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) occurring this week in Miami:

“I’m skeptical about any FTAA agreement that establishes only a minimum baseline of commitments for all participants. This in effect could allow some countries to opt out of higher obligations that other nations would assume.

“That’s not what the FTAA vision as originally conceived was about. Hemispheric integration will work only if all countries play by the same rules. The benefits of hemispheric integration will be fully realized only if all countries commit themselves to the same rules, and those rules should reflect a high level of ambition. With this in mind, I’m disappointed that some of our negotiating partners don’t seek a high level of ambition in the FTAA negotiations. But the vision of the FTAA must be defined through consensus. That means that each of the 34 countries shares the responsibility for defining the vision of an FTAA.

“Some countries, such as Brazil, seem to be advocating a minimalist approach to the FTAA. That’s certainly their right. But it seems unrealistic for any of our negotiating partners to believe there should be no correlation between the degree of obligations assumed and the degree of benefits conferred by an agreement. It simply doesn’t make sense that those countries that are unwilling to assume greater responsibility for economic growth and integration in the hemisphere should get the same privileges as those that do. It’s just common sense that the benefits gained should be equal to the obligations assumed. I hope that at the end of the day, we achieve a comprehensive, ambitious hemispheric trade agreement. I’ll keep working toward that.”